



New Hampshire

# Department of Education Technical Advisory

*Serving New Hampshire's Education Community*

United States and New Hampshire Government/Civics

RSA 189:11

*This Technical Advisory continues the New Hampshire Department of Education's communication regarding the new legislation which was passed into law during the 2017 legislative session. **SB 45 became effective August 7, 2017.***

SB 45, signed by Governor Sununu on **June 8, 2017**, amends RSA 189:11 which requires instruction in national and state history and government. The amendment adds into state law a graduation requirement of a one-half credit course in United States and New Hampshire government/civics. This is already a requirement in the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval. However, the amended language adds specificity to the current Minimum Standards detailed in Ed. 306.46. The specifics of these instructional areas are not all included in the Minimum Standards, and therefore, school administrators must check to ensure that these are included in your local courses.

The new language added to RSA 189:11, which is in bold font for convenience, is posted below:

- I. In all public and private schools in the state there shall be given regular courses of instruction in the history, government and constitutions of the United States and New Hampshire, including the organization and operation of New Hampshire municipal, county and state government and of the federal government. Such instruction shall begin not later than the **beginning** of the eighth grade and shall continue in **all high schools** as a component of a **one credit** course of **instruction required for high school graduation** in United States and New Hampshire **history and a one-half credit course of instruction required for high school graduation in United States and New Hampshire government/civics. A school district shall develop and offer the United States and New Hampshire government/civics course and at a minimum, the course shall include instruction in the following areas:**
  - (a) **Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.**
  - (b) **Skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.**
  - (c) **The U.S. Constitution and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the U.S. Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of the United States.**

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- (d) The New Hampshire constitution and the principles stated in the articles of the New Hampshire constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of New Hampshire.***
- (e) The structure and functions of the 3 branches comprising federal and state governments: legislative, judicial, and executive.***
- (f) The role, opportunities, and responsibilities of a citizen to engage in civic activity.***
- (g) The role and interactions of the state of New Hampshire and local government within the framework of the U.S. Constitution and of extended powers and functions provided to local governments.***
- (h) How federal, state, and local governments address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations, and taking action.***
- (i) The role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of monetary policy.***

II. As a component of instruction under paragraph I, a locally developed competency assessment of United States government and civics that includes, but is not limited to, the nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the United States government, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders, shall be administered to students as part of the high school course in history and government of the United States and New Hampshire. Students who attain a passing grade on the competency assessment shall be eligible for a certificate issued by the school district. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) test may be used to satisfy the requirement of this paragraph.

There were no changes in SB 45 to paragraph II above and schools and districts must continue to administer either locally developed competency assessments or the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) test to satisfy the requirement of this paragraph. However, schools and districts should ensure that their assessments cover the components in paragraph I.

This new law is applicable to all civics courses taught starting this school year (2017-18) and those courses must reflect the areas addressed in paragraph I. As mentioned previously,

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however, the requirement for all students to graduate with **one credit** in United States and New Hampshire history and a **one-half credit** in United States and New Hampshire government/civics has been a requirement in the Minimum Standards for several years. Therefore, all of your students who have taken government/civics in previous years **and** earned that credit before the 2017-18 school year, do not need to retake this course.

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